

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes ☐
no ☒

Property Name: May Bowen House Inventory Number: CT-768
 Address: 3995 Old Town Road City: Huntingtown Zip Code: 20639
 County: Calvert USGS Topographic Map: Prince Frederick
 Owner: Huntingtown Medical Center, LLC Is the property being evaluated a district? ☐ yes
 Tax Parcel Number: 14 Tax Map Number: 18 Tax Account ID Number: 02 001101
 Project: Huntingtown Professional Building Agency: SHA, Tracking No. 07-AP-CA-002
 Site visit by MHT Staff: ☒ no ☐ yes Name: _____ Date: _____
 Is the property located within a historic district? ☒ yes ☐ No

If the property is within a district District Inventory Number: CT - 1278
 NR-listed district ☐ yes Eligible district ☐ yes District Name: Town of Huntingtown (recommended "Not NR eligible, 2001")
 Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource ☐ yes ☐ no Non-contributing but eligible in another context ☐

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)
 Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible ☐ yes ☐ no

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in:

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

Description

The May Bowen House is located on a 5.2 acre parcel of land, in the historic section of the town of Huntingtown. The house, which is partially built into a bank, sits back from Old Town Road approximately 200 ft. The house lot is defined on three sides by a low, rusticated concrete block retaining wall. The walls of this two-story, two-bay, hipped-roof, frame dwelling rest on a full basement made of poured concrete. The narrow-gauge lapped siding is original and well maintained. A one-story, hipped-roof extension projects from the rear of the house, and appears contemporary with the main building. A full-width hipped roof porch is also present, with floor, columns and balustrade that also appear to be original.

The dwelling's pressed-metal roof is pierced by three hipped-roof dormers and a tall, corbelled stove chimney. Three lightning rods are also present. The overhanging eaves are boxed, and the cornice treated simply with a wide plain frieze board. Narrow corner boards define the building's ends.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ☐ Eligibility not recommended ☒
 Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None
 Comments: _____

[Signature]
 Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services
[Signature]
 Reviewer, NR Program

3/27/2013
 Date
3/28/13
 Date

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Continuation Sheet No. 1

CT-768

Windows are original and arranged in pairs on the façade, and singly on the side walls. Except for the dormers, which employ four-light, fixed sash units, the same type of window is used throughout the house, including the rear shed section. The upper unit has nine lights of alternating sizes. The lower sash contains a single pane. The twelve-light glazed and panel door front also appears original. The same is true of the glazed-and-paneled side and rear doors.

Interior fabric remains largely intact. The kitchen, bathroom and heating systems are the only aspects that have been modernized. The plaster walls and ceiling survive in good condition. Both are painted white, with no evidence of wall paper or other treatment. The only damage is from a roughly 3 ft. x 3 ft. section of fallen plaster ceiling above the second floor.

Measuring, roughly 30 ft. x 30 ft., in plan, the house displays a classic four square layout, with the main area of the first floor divided into four unequally sized spaces; three rooms and an entry hall. A somewhat modern kitchen is located in the rear, one-story section. Most likely this space was originally used as a pantry. The second floor contains a center hall, three bedrooms and a small bathroom.

The front door opens into a small entry hall. On the left is an open-string, quarter-turn, and staircase. It retains its original, square, paneled, newel post, unturned balustrade, as well as original varnish finish. Door and window casings are plain, flat, square-edge pieces fitted with equally plain, flat, square-edged corner blocks. The square edge baseboards are topped with an ovolo bead. The French doors fitted in the opening that connect the front living room with the rear dining room appear original. The other interior doors are five-horizontal-panel types, fitted with hardware sets that display square corner escutcheon plates and metal knob sets. Trim, flooring and doors are fashioned out of pine.

Integrity

The minor plaster damage represents extent of the now-vacant dwelling's deterioration. Otherwise, the house is very well-built, intact and structurally sounds. It retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

History

The c. 1920 May Bowen House is named for Anna May Bowen (c. 1895-1984), who along with her husband Allen S. Bowen (c. 1894-1970), purchased the subject property for \$1,000 in 1936. The Bowens acquired the then 10 acre parcel of land as a result of a forced sale resulting from the default on a \$1,000 mortgage on the part of Arthur A. Harkness. The Harkness mortgage was written in 1932, but that document does not indicate when, or for how much, Harkness purchased the property. It also fails to reference the deed associated with his purchase. However, in both the Bowen deed and the Harkness mortgage, the property is conveyed by Gertrude Harris, Ethel Harris Plummer and Lewis Plummer. The ten acres associated with these transactions were part of a 389 acre parcel that Gertrude and Ethel acquired in 1905, following the death of their parents.¹

It is unknown when the dwelling was built. The most likely date range is around 1911-1920. The 1910 USGS map does not indicate the presence of a building in the dwelling's location. Tax records report a 1920s construction date, which is reasonable from an architectural standpoint, but likely only an estimate on the part of a tax assessor. Based on land records it would seem that the house was built by the Bowens, as their \$1,000 purchase price is curiously low for ten acres and a new house, and suggests the land was unimproved at the time of the sale. As evidence, consider that during the 1920s, unassembled mail order homes from Sears & Roebuck for houses of this type cost nearly \$2,000.²

On the other hand, stylistic evidence is against the theory that house dates to the Bowen purchase. The May Bowen House is a dwelling type known as the "four-square" or sometimes, "American Four Square." This widely popular national house type was built in large numbers throughout the country, starting in the last decade of the 19th century and continuing through the 1920s. Construction patterns of the four squares parallel that of other house types of the period, and feel off precipitously due

¹ Calvert County Land Records, AAH 38, folio 65 and AAH 14, folio 156.

² Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl. *Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986), 288.

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Continuation Sheet No. 2

CT - 768

to the Great Depression and following World War. A 1936 construction date cannot be ruled out, but it would be a very late date for the building of a four square.³

Construction date issues aside, May and Allen Bowen found the property desirable for its proximity to Mr. Bowen's business. In 1926, Allen Bowen, in partnership with his brother Elmer Bowen, purchased an adjacent 1-acre lot and built a garage and gas station. That building, listed on the MIHP as the E. O. Bowen and Brother Garage (CT-767), operated until 1964.⁴ It is now used as a bank and antiques shop.

The May Bowen House and adjacent former garage are associated with a period of physical and economic expansion in the town of Huntingtown. Map evidence indicates that the small crossroad village more than tripled in size during the first few decades of the 20th century.⁵ Accessible by neither water nor rail, the 19th-century postal village served the needs of the immediate population. In 1910 Huntingtown consisted of little more than a Methodist Church, store/post office and a few surrounding farms. By 1938 dozens of buildings were clustered near the intersection of present-day Old Town Road and Huntingtown Road. The town continued to grow into the 1950s.

The growth of Huntingtown during the first half of the 20th century occurred in direct response to the rise of the automobile as the principal form of transportation, and Huntington's location along, what was then, Solomon's Island Road (Rt. 2). Solomon's Island Road, both in its former and current alignment, served as the principal north-south corridor through Calvert County. This period also saw the establishment of a variety of other business and civic buildings in Huntingtown. In addition to the E.O. Bowen and Brother Garage, other pre-World War II concerns include Lyons and Gibson Lumber, Bowen Grocery, Huntingtown School, Huntington United Methodist Church, as well as a dozen or so dwellings. A 2001 survey found that thirty-four (67%) of Huntingtown's fifty-one buildings were constructed prior to 1951.⁶

In 1953 Maryland Governor Theodore McKeldin initiated a major state-wide system of road building and improvements that came to be known as the "Twelve Year Program." In Calvert County the program manifested itself in the realignment of Solomon's Island Road.⁷ In an effort to ease congestion around the growing town of Huntingtown, a new bypass road--present day Route 2--was constructed immediately east of the town. The new right-of-way literally ran through the back yard of the May Bowen House. The old main road through the town's center was appropriately renamed Old Town Road (Rt. 524). After the road's realignment, Huntingtown through traffic became a fraction of former levels. Development around the former crossroads also declined, and since the road realignment, most new development has taken place east of the historic downtown, along present-day Route 2.

National Register Eligibility

The May Bowen House is an intact and very good example of a highly popular early-20th century house type. However, its level of significance, even at the local level, does not appear sufficient to warrant listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Criterion A (Events): The May Bowen House is associated with the building boom that took place in Huntingtown in the first half of the 20th century. Huntingtown's growth during this period is a small town, rural example, which shows in microcosm how, in the first decades of the 20th century, the popularity of the automobile spurred massive development. This very important trend occurred throughout the country and in population centers of all sizes. The impact of the automobile on the

³ Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman. *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 171. Lanier and Herman write that the four-square's popularity was in decline by about 1920, but Patricia Poore with Old House Journal believes that the house type remained desirable until the start of the Great Depression.

⁴ Bowen, Robert. Interview by Sherri Marsh Johns. At Bowen's Grocery Store, March 11, 2013.

⁵ Present day Huntingtown is not to be confused with the nearby Colonial era town of the same name that was destroyed by the British in 1814.

⁶ Joseph Schuman. *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form, Town of Huntingtown, CT-1278* (2001).

⁷ *A History of Road Building In Maryland* (Annapolis: State Roads Commission of Maryland, 1958), 165.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Continuation Sheet No. 3

CT-768

American landscape cannot be overstated.⁸ The nexus between this cultural phenomenon, Huntingtown and the Bowens is further illustrated by the fact that the Bowens operated the town's garage and gas station.

However, with respect to this trend, the May Bowen House should be looked at in the context of Huntingtown as a whole, not as an individual property in isolation. The Town of Huntingtown was evaluated in 2001 and recommended as "Not Eligible" due to integrity issues.

The large house was often a community gathering place and was used for, among other things, Boy Scout meetings and Democratic Party fundraisers. The house is not known to be associated with any important events or that would rise to the level of National Register significance.

Criterion B: (Person): This property is not associated with the lives of persons important in our past. The Bowen name is well known in southern Maryland and Calvert County in particular. Their presence in Calvert County goes back to at least the mid-18th century.⁹ Various members of this large family have achieved success in business, and held local public office. Allen and May Bowen were active and well-regarded in the community, and operated a successful business, but their individual accomplishments lack lasting historical importance.

Criterion C: (Design/Construction): The May Bowen House is easily distinguishable as a very good and almost unaltered example of a four square dwelling. Four square houses are typically two-story, two-bay cubes, topped by a pyramidal or hipped roof. A full-width front porch is almost always present. As the name suggests, they are always nearly square in plan. The first floor usually consists of a living room, dining room, kitchen and half-depth, side passage. The May Bowen House has all of these features defining features.

The four square is characterized as a type, rather than a style. Examples range from the plain and small to large and elaborate. The basic form is usually embellished with stylistic element derived from the Colonial Revival, Craftsman or Prairie styles. The four square was popularized through magazines, farm, and trade journals. The four square was even available by mail from a variety of companies. Sears, Roebuck and Company offered more than a dozen four square variants through its mail-order Modern Homes program.¹⁰ The May Bowen House is large and well-built, but relatively plain and makes no overt stylistic reference. It is not recognizable as a Sears, Montgomery Wards, or other mail-order company house, though that remains a possibility.

Because the four square was built in such large numbers throughout the country, and survive in such quantity, a high bar has been set for their National Register eligibility. To date, in Maryland no four square has been individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The May Bowen House, while possessing a high degree of physical integrity, is an ordinary and undistinguished example of its type. Furthermore, it does not represent the work of a master or possess high artistic value. The building lacks the architectural significance to warrant National Register listing at this time.

Criterion D: (Information Potential): The May Bowen House is unlikely to yield important historical information.

⁸ Chester H. Liebs. *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 21-23.

⁹ Ancestry.com, "Lackey's-Harkelroads," <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/93665/family/familygroup?fpid=772785395>.

¹⁰ Stevenson and Jandl.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Continuation Sheet No. 4

CT-768



Figure 1: 1910 USGS Map, Prince Frederick quad excerpt. No building is indicated in the location of the May Bowen House.

●

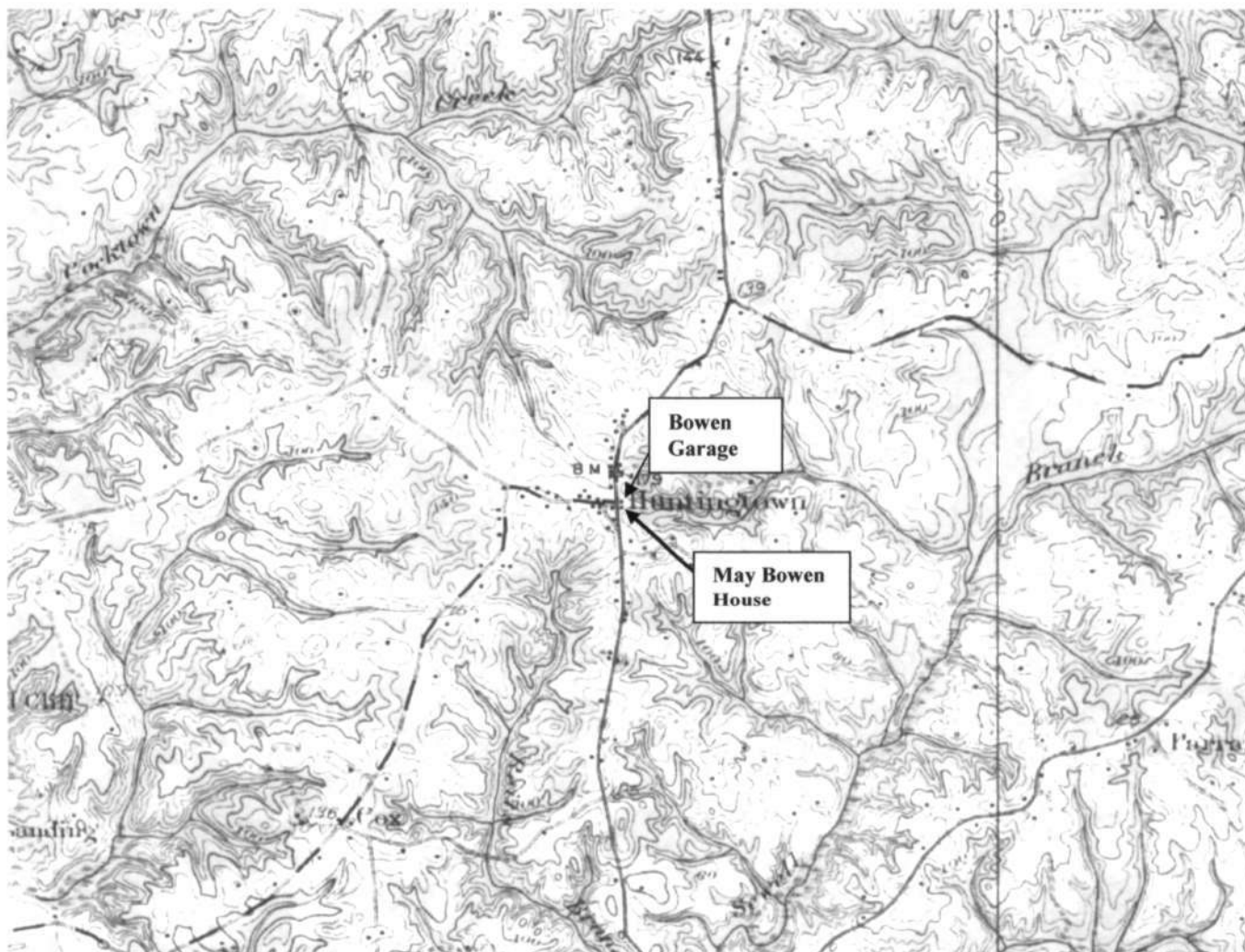


Figure 2: 1938 USGS Map, Prince Frederick Quad Excerpt. Note how by this year the town's building density had moved east towards old Solomon's Island Road.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Continuation Sheet No. 6

CT-768

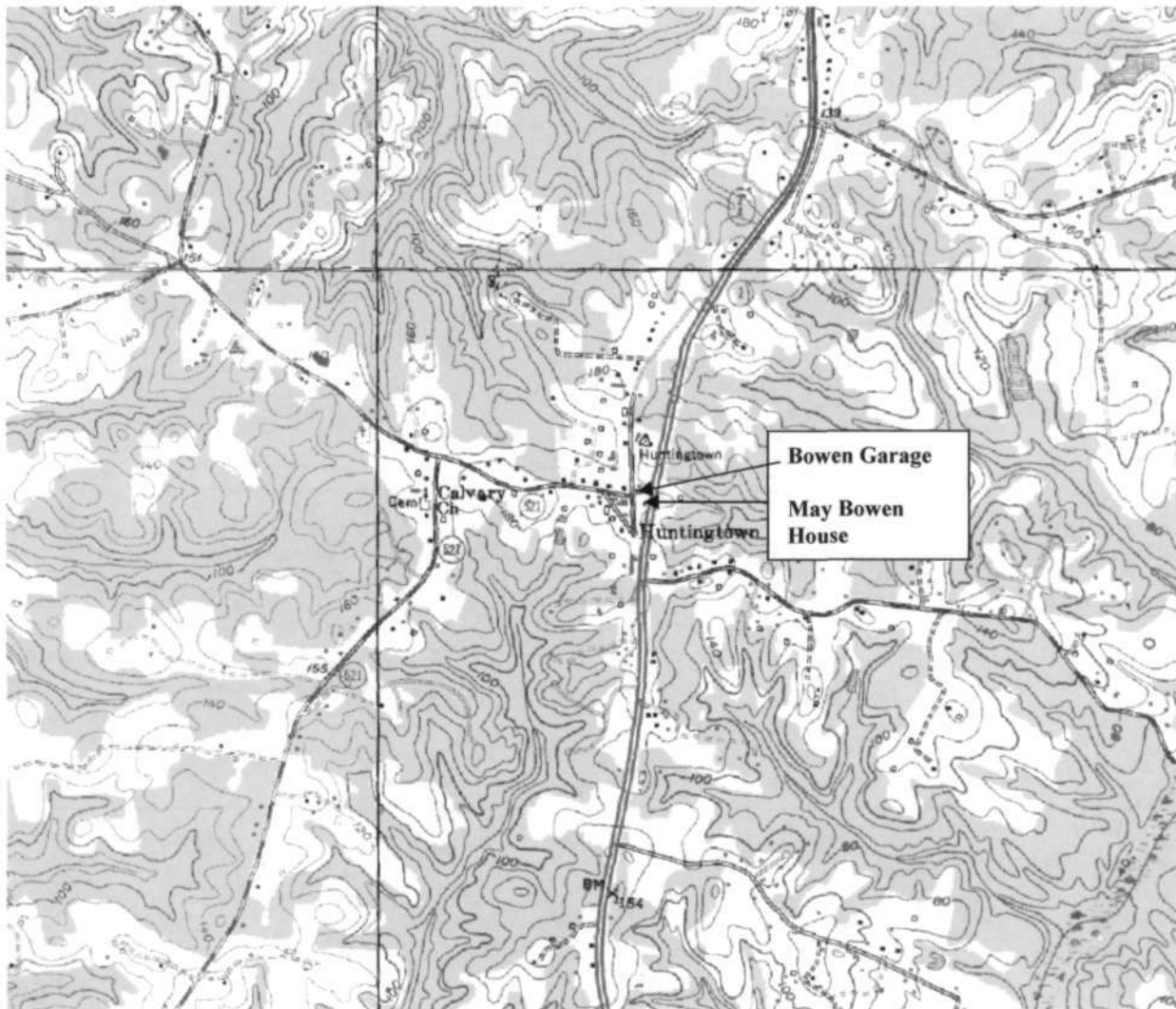


Figure 3: This current USGS map viewed on Trails.com shows the realignment of Solomon's Island Road.

Prepared by:

Sherri Marsh Johns
Retrospect, LLC

Date Prepared: March 18, 2013





3695

COUNTRY
COMMERCIAL, LLC
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410-620-4022
www.countrycommercial.com

MAY-BOWEN HOUSE CT-768
Old Town Rd, Huntingtown Calvert Co., MD
by S. M. Johns

MARCH 2013

Digital MASTER at MHT

Camera facing S.EAST

Photo 2 of 7



MA-1 Bowen House CT-768
Old Town Rd, Hunningtown, Calvert Co, MD
by S.M. Johns
March 2013

353185m and 353185m 353185m 353185m

Digital Master at MD SHPO

Camera facing SW

353185m 353185m 353185m 353185m

Photo 3 of 7



MAY Bowen House CT 768
Old Town Rd, Hometown, Calvert Co., MD
by S. M. Johns
MARCH 2013

Digital MASTER at MHT
Camera facing NE

Photo 4 of 7



MA-1 BOWEN House CT 768

old Town ~~W~~ Rd, Huntingtown, Calvert Co., MD

by S.M. Johns

MARCH 2013

Digital MASTER at MHT

INTERIOR

photo 5 of 7



MAY BOWEN HOUSE CT- 768
OLD TOWN Rd., Huntingtown, Calvert Co., MD
by S.M. Johns
MARCH 2013

Digital MASTER at MHT

INTERIOR

photo 6 of 7



MAY BOWEN House CT-768

Old Town Rd., Huntingtown, Calverton Co., Md

by S. M. Johns

MARCH 2013

Digital MASTER at MHT

2nd floor Interior

Photo 7 of 7

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. CT-768

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common May Bowen House

2. Location

street & number Old Town Road, across from Huntingtown Road (MD 524) (MD 521) ☐ not for publicationcity, town Huntingtown ☐ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Calvert

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name May Bowen and Evelyn May Paul

street & number c/o Diane Whiteside telephone no.:

city, town Fairfax state and zip code Virginia 22030

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Calvert County Courthouse liber

street & number Main Street (MD 765) folio

city, town Prince Frederick state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. CT-768

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☐ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This house is located on a broad, level site, back off Old Town Road. It faces west, toward the intersection of Old Town and Huntingtown Roads. Set on a concrete block foundation, the house is a two-story four-square, built in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is a framed and weatherboarded structure with a pyramidal roof. There is a hipped dormer in each of the faces of the roof. The two-bay facade indicates a side-passage plan. There is a one-story hipped-roof porch supported by Doric columns that are connected by rails and balusters. This porch shelters only the facade. A rear one-story extension is early. There are two interior brick chimneys. The yard is defined by a low wall and intermediate piers composed of concrete blocks that are molded to look like ashlar.

8. Significance

Survey No. CT-768

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Directed historical research would more firmly establish the historical significance of this site.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CF-768

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Prince Frederick, MDQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Camille Wells		
organization	MHT/Calvert Planning Department	date	September 30, 1986
street & number	Courthouse, Main Street	telephone	(301) 535-2348
city or town	Prince Frederick	state	Maryland 20678

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CT-768

37'30"

359000m.E.

ANNA
SUND

LOWER MARLBORO 4.0 MI.

Calvary
Ch

Calvary
Ch

Huntingtown

Huntingtown

CT-768
May Bowen House
3995 Old Town Road (MD 524)
Prince Frederick Quad, 1953, RR
1974

Patuxent
Ch

